

# *Iowa Outdoors*

## Iowa Department of Natural Resources

**[www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com)**

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**Aug. 17, 2004**

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### **PHEASANT OUTLOOK: AN EARLY PEEK AT THE AUGUST ROADSIDE ROUTES**

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Nearly cloaked from view, its head still poked out from a tuft of roadside grass. As we approached, the young bird ducked into the ditch. But its position was marked. Wading in after, conservation officer Steve Schutte got his results in a few moments. “One, two, three. There’s four. Five. Six,” tallied Schutte, as the awkward, half-grown pheasants fluttered out of the early morning dew in southern Cerro Gordo County.

In a couple months, those flushes will be full speed, with young roosters cackling as they rocket away from hunters. On a wet, August morning, though, their still-developing wings could barely lift them over the eight-foot cornrows to safety. Still, Schutte had what he needed. “Crow sized? Pigeon sized?” he debated, as he tallied them on his August roadside game survey sheet.

Wildlife workers and conservation officers with the Department of Natural Resources are wrapping up surveys on 220 routes across Iowa. When results are compiled, within a few weeks, hunters will have a pretty solid forecast of pheasant numbers for 2004; improved areas or ‘down’ regions and an idea of the impact from heavy rains that drenched Iowa late in the spring. Much of Iowa received four inches *above* normal rainfall during May; flooding many nests or killing just-hatched chicks during the peak of pheasant reproduction. “We saw birds that were small, indicating a late hatch,” noted Schutte. “We had a tremendously late spring here and it hurt birds

when they first nested. They get off a second nest, though, so we have young birds around now.”

Closer to home, three routes near me showed just why hunters cannot read too much into any single survey. One area was up. One was about the same. And one was down. I have ridden that ‘down’ Cedar County circuit for most of 15 years now with wildlife technician Dennis Proctor. While not a pheasant-heavy route, we never ended with zero birds. Until this year. “Just about everywhere on the route, up to the last couple miles, it was corn and soybeans,” explains Proctor. “There were some grass strips, but even those were mowed.” Of course, that doesn’t mean there are absolutely no pheasants in that 30-mile route. As we drove home, a mile from the start of the route, we saw three roosters within a couple hundred yards of each other. But a zero goes into the books and that will tug down the overall results.

Each route is to start at dawn, preferably with clear skies, calm winds and heavy dew. Those conditions push pheasants—and other wildlife species—out to the gravel roads in the early morning, to dry off. That gives surveyors the best chance of seeing birds; and logging details such as brood sizes, size of the chicks and number of roosters and hens. Hungarian partridge, quail and rabbits—cottontails and jack—are also listed, if seen.

It was cloudy and a little windy, as we set out; not ideal conditions. Re-running it the next day, under ideal conditions, he counted 42, almost identical to his ’03 count. “I saw more birds, and they were bigger, nearly adult sized,” relayed Schutte. That indicated even *more* pheasants, had the smaller, first-day birds been factored in. Only one survey counts, though. Schutte went with the second one. The sampling is designed to show trends, not complete numbers. By plugging in all route results, biologists build the annual upland game forecast, which a couple hundred thousand of us depend upon, as we make fall hunting plans.

Last season, upland hunters harvested 1.08 million pheasants, up slightly from 2002; both up from 2001, when one of the harshest winters on record slashed pheasant populations and drove the season harvest to an all time low. Biologists will weigh a wet spring against a relatively mild winter, before gauging prospects for this fall.

Besides fewer pheasants on his route, Schutte pointed to a lack of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) fields, in fields now supporting corn and soybeans. From 1991-98, with hundreds of CRP acres on his route, he twice tallied more than 120 pheasants, with counts of 50-plus birds six times. “We saw birds where we had some cover,” said Schutte. “My route has changed over the last few years. Where we had a lot of CRP before, there is little now. That’s reflected in the bird numbers.”

#### **Newsnotes:**

\*The first of Iowa’s ‘fall’ hunting seasons get underway September 1, when cottontail rabbits and squirrels become fair game.

- \*2004-05 Hunting, Fishing and Trapping regulations are now out. It covers license and fee requirements, hunter education information and other regulation summaries. The season dates and bag limits brochure will be available late this month.
- \*Iowa's 2004 Deer (and Fall Turkey) Hunting Regulations and License Instructions booklet is also available now. Those licenses went on sale August 15. The 'deer' guide highlights changes this year, fees, information on seasons (particularly special seasons) and other deer and turkey related information.
- \*Hunter Education classes will be filling, as we approach the fall seasons. Know some one who needs the course? Classes are shown on the DNR website; [www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com). Click on 'education & safety,' then 'conservation law enforcement,' then 'hunter education' to learn more. Iowans born in 1972 or after—and nonresidents born in 1967 or after must complete a course in to obtain a hunting license.

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## **ADDING TREES TO CRP OFFER BEST CHANCE TO GET LAND INTO PROGRAM**

DES MOINES - Eligible landowners can apply to enroll property in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) from Aug. 30 through Sept. 24.

The CRP will pay landowners an annual land rental rate of about \$100 per acre for establishing trees or grasses on the property. The program, which is administered through the Farm Service Agency, will also reimburse landowners 50 percent of their costs of establishing the trees. Tree planting contracts are eligible for either ten or fifteen years of rental payments.

“Planting a mix of trees suitable for wildlife is the best way to maximize your chances of getting land successfully enrolled in the CRP,” said Paul Tauke, supervisor with the DNR's forestry bureau.

Because tree plantings provide benefits that endure long after the CRP contract expires and trees provide the most efficient long term solution for storing atmospheric carbon, the CRP formula provides a significant number of additional points for tree planting that are not available for other practices.

“There is no question that planting trees on your CRP ground is the single best way to maximize your points and get land accepted into the program,” Tauke said.

For more information on the Conservation Reserve Program, contact the county Farm Service Agency office. To learn how trees can benefit you, your CRP bid and the environment log on to [www.iowadnr.com/forestry/crp.html](http://www.iowadnr.com/forestry/crp.html) or contact your district forester. District foresters are listed on the Iowa DNR's website at

[www.iowadnr.com/forestry/](http://www.iowadnr.com/forestry/), or by contacting Tauke at 515-242-6898, or via e-mail [paul.tauke@dnr.state.ia.us](mailto:paul.tauke@dnr.state.ia.us).

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## SNAKES IN IOWA; BAD REP

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

With a firm hold on the girl's arm, the fox snake writhed around her neck, steadying itself. Suddenly, the two-foot reptile's tail reared up, brushing her face. Seven-year-old Rylee Frake opened her mouth and screamed. With laughter! So did the five kids and half dozen adults watching the harmless snake wrap itself around her shoulders. Two more kids clamored that it was their turn. What? You were expecting a horror story?

The scene was the Education Center at Johnson County's Kent Park, west of Tiffin. My niece and nephew, Mataya and Joey Norris, were here for a couple days and we were looking for something to do. Disney World was a little too far. I don't do malls. Maybe the nature displays at Kent Park? County conservation department naturalist Brad Freidhof offered to get them up close and personal with a snake, too, if they desired. Mataya, 7, crowed that it would be a great idea--though I suspected a little false bravado. Joey, 5, showed guarded enthusiasm. Emphasis on guarded.

Actually, the idea came a week prior. A wildlife program with about 15 younger grade school kids ended with them telling me their experiences with wild animals. For four or five of them, it centered on snakes. Dead ones. 'Mom killed one in the garden' or 'Dad runs over them with the mower' was the central theme. Around here this summer, too, our boat and dock had become a warm nap site for a three-foot northern water snake. It has since been relocated, but not before eliciting a few screams and anxious moments from passengers before it slithered into the water.

So what is it with snakes? "A lot of people are really fearful of snakes," acknowledges Freidhof. "(Many) people are unaware of why snakes are here; their purpose. Fox snakes and other reptiles that are predators control the insect and rodent populations. When we lose those snakes, we see increases in insects, in rats and mice."

When I was about 12, I learned in a hurry that people have different tolerance levels. Garter snakes were common in the fields and marsh near our house. We thought they looked pretty cool as handlebar decorations on our bikes. Our neighbor, Lily, didn't share our enthusiasm. We discovered that as she went screaming up the street—pretty fast for some one her age, by the way. A phone call to our parents and one apology later; lesson learned. We never did find out her feelings about crawdads and frogs, our other summertime entertainment.

What spawns this fear of snakes and other crawly critters? “The reason for repulsion is unclear,” admit Carl H. Ernst and George R. Zug, in their Smithsonian Collection book, ‘Snakes in Question.’ “It’s probably a learned response (arising) from folk tales and exaggeration and perhaps from the association of the metaphorical serpent in the Garden of Eden.” So, it’s basically, a case of bad publicity. Since the dawn of time!

Education can help. Ernst and Zug mention medical research that now or someday may focus on snakes. Snakes are resistant to freezing. Temperature and hydration help determine sex of developing snakes. For some, blood pressure varies at different circulatory sites. Some are immune to others’ toxins. See any medical applications? However, one-on-one experience probably works better. “We like to have repeat contact with them; to talk to people when they are young,” stresses Freidhof. “That can keep them comfortable with snakes through life. We try to promote that snakes and *every* living organism on this planet have a purpose. We may not know what it is, but we are here to find out.”

For a half dozen kids, the purpose was learning something new. “I never touched a snake before,” laughed Rylee’s nine-year-old sister Hansen. “It felt like I was holding a big, scaly rock. It just crawled around my neck and went down my (arm).”

And Mataya and Joey? Joe did hold one, though it was an arm’s length affair. Mataya, though, gladly posed for photos (her favorite activity) with the snake twisted around her shoulders. “I wanted to see how he would feel. It squirmed around a lot,” she admitted.

Next, we work on Joey’s habit of stomping any spider he encounters.

### **What you don’t know about snakes**

Snakes can become more common in late summer and early fall, searching for a winter hibernaculum. To keep them away from your home or buildings, remove ‘snake friendly’ habitat; stacks of firewood, rocks, brush piles. Caulk cracks in foundations or frames, to keep them out as they seek warmer winter climes.

One person’s threat is another’s treasure. Johnson County Conservation Department Naturalist Brad Freidhof had a waiting list for snakes, when he held the same job in Pocahontas. “If someone brought us a snake, farmers would say, ‘bring it on out.’ In agricultural settings, with a lot of grain, they work free, day or night, to control rodent populations,” says Freidhof. “Otherwise, that’s a loss of profit.”

Virtually all of Iowa’s 27 species of snakes are harmless to humans. Their primary source of food is insects (especially smaller ones) or rodents, fish, frogs or other snakes. Some are more aggressive and will bite (such as northern water snakes) but create just a mild irritation. Others are quite docile.

Venomous snakes are rare in Iowa. Two of our four species are found only in a tiny pocket of southeast (copperhead) or northwest (prairie rattlesnake) Iowa. The other two (timber rattlesnake and massasauga) are sometimes found across parts of southern and eastern Iowa, but require specific, rocky habitat. Though bites can be dangerous to humans, they are rarely fatal, with quick medical treatment.

All snakes in Iowa are treated as protected species (the same designation as songbirds and other non-game wildlife) *except for* the garter snake and--in 86 counties and within 50 yards of occupied houses--the timber rattlesnake. The rattler is a protected species in 13 counties, primarily in northeast and southern Iowa.

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## ***IOWA FISHING REPORT***

**For the week of August 17, 2004**

**[www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com)**

The Iowa Fishing Report is issued every other week into the fall. For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report.

### **Southwest**

**Viking** (Montgomery): Crappie and bluegill fishing is fair using jigs tipped with night crawler or minnow in 6 to 8 feet of water. Channel catfish fishing is good using liver. Largemouth bass fishing has picked up in the evening around structure.

**Cold Springs** (Cass): Fishing is fair for crappies around the aerators. Channel catfish fishing is good.

**Manawa** (Pottawattamie): Fishing is excellent for channel catfish around Boy Scout Island. Walleyes are being caught on the west shore along the rocks.

**Orient** (Adair): Channel catfish are fair in evenings using liver.

**Greenfield** (Adair): Channel catfish are good toward evening.

**Mormon Trail** (Adair): Walleye fishing is good using crankbaits or jigs. Anglers are catching 7 to 9-inch crappies using minnows in 6 to 8 feet of water. Fishing is good for largemouth bass and bluegills. Channel catfish are good using night crawlers or liver.

**Meadow** (Adair): Bluegill fishing is fair on jigs and night crawlers.

**Prairie Rose** (Shelby): Fishing is fair for 7-inch crappies in 6 to 8 feet of water using jigs and minnows around rocks and woody structure. Bass fishing is good. Anglers are catching channel catfish on liver.

**DeSoto Bend** (Harrison): Walleye and crappie fishing is fair. Walleyes being harvested are 15 to 16 inches. Anglers also are catching good numbers of largemouth bass. Carp are being caught near shore.

**Littlefield Lake** (Audubon): Fishing is fair for large bluegills drifting with night crawlers. Channel catfish fishing is good.

**Willow** (Harrison): Largemouth Bass fishing is fair in the evenings around structure. Bluegills are good along weed edges. Channel Catfish are being caught in the evenings using chicken liver.

**Southwest Iowa Farm Ponds:** Channel catfish, bluegill and largemouth bass fishing is fair. Remember to ask permission and clean up after yourself.

**Big Creek** (Polk): Channel catfish fishing has been good using night crawlers and cut stink baits. Bluegill fishing has slowed although fish 8 inches or larger are common. Crappie fishing is better in deeper water.

**Lake Ahquabi** (Warren): Channel catfish fishing is good with cut and stink baits. Bluegill and redear sunfish fishing has been slow using jigs or hook/bobber combination with worms or wax worms.

**Hooper Lake** (Warren): Bluegill fishing has been fair using worms and jigs. Largemouth bass fishing has been slow using buzzbaits and surface lures.

**Hickory Grove** (Story): Channel catfish fishing has been fair on night crawlers. Largemouth bass fishing has been slow with top-water lures and buzzbaits. Crappie fishing has been fair in deeper water.

**Don Williams** (Boone): Channel catfish has been good to excellent using night crawlers and chicken liver. Crappie and bluegill fishing has been slow; use minnows and jigs for crappie, and small jigs with worms for bluegill. Largemouth bass fishing has slowed, with some fish hitting on surface plugs and crankbaits.

**Rock Creek Lake** (Jasper): Channel catfish fishing has been good along the shorelines and shallow water. Crappie fishing is slow with the best fishing in deeper water. Largemouth bass fishing is also slow, although a few nice fish have been reported.

**Easter Lake** (Polk): Channel catfish fishing has been good with most caught on night crawlers and stink baits. Bluegill and crappie fishing has slowed, although a few anglers have been doing well.

**Red Rock** (Marion): White bass fishing has been excellent using crankbaits, sonars and a variety of casting lures. Channel catfish fishing has been fair, with the better areas in bays and coves.

**Red Rock tailwater** (Marion): Channel catfish fishing has been good using traditional baits, and a few nice walleye have been caught. White bass fishing has been good in the tailwater using jigs and minnows. Crappies in the 10 to 14-inch range are starting to show up in good numbers.

**Roberts Creek** (Marion): Crappie fishing has been fair to good using jigs with minnows and/or night crawlers and channel catfish have been hitting on night crawlers.

**Saylorville Lake** (Polk): White bass fishing has been good to excellent either trolling crankbaits or casting small spoons from shore. A few wipers are mixed in, but fish from 3 to 4 pounds are being caught. Channel catfish fishing has been good with traditional baits, with one of the better areas in the spillway outlet at Big Creek Lake.

**Saylorville Lake tailwater/river** (Polk): White bass and channel catfish fishing have been good below Saylorville Reservoir. Flathead catfish fishing is fair with some nice fish reported from the tailwater of Saylorville.

**Three Mile (Union):** Channel catfish are being caught with liver. Bluegill and some crappies are being caught on wax worms, night crawlers, and minnows in 8 to 14 feet of water. Largemouth bass and walleye can be caught on crankbaits and jigs in deeper water. Anglers are starting to catch muskies. Smallmouth bass are being caught along the dam using jigs that look like crayfish.

**Twelve Mile (Union):** Fishing for channel catfish is good using night crawlers or liver.

**Icaria (Adams):** Fishing is good for catfish using liver.

**Green Valley (Union):** Channel catfish can be caught in the bays using liver and night crawlers. Some bluegill can be caught on wax worms and night crawlers around the deeper structure.

**Little River (Decatur):** Catfish can be caught in the open bays using liver or night crawlers. Crappies are being caught in the flooded trees and deeper bays. Some walleyes are being taken with crankbaits.

**Slip Bluff (Decatur):** Some crappies are being caught off the deeper trees piles and flooded timber.

**West Lake Osceola (Clarke):** Largemouth bass are biting on crankbaits and jigs. Channel catfish fishing is good using liver.

**Fogle Lake (Ringgold):** Some bluegill can be caught near the ramp or around the jetties. Channel catfish can be caught in the rocks or shallow bays. The lake is currently being lowered to improve fish growth but is still accessible for fishing.

**Windmill (Taylor):** Crappie and bluegill are biting on crawlers and wax worms off the deeper structure.

**For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.**

### **Southeast**

**Mississippi River Pools 16 to 19:** Fishing on the Mississippi River Pools 16 – 19 has been good. The water temperature at Lock and Dam 16 (Muscatine) is 71 degrees and the river pool stage on Pool 16 is 11.43 and is expected to remain stable over the next several days. In **Pools 16 to 19**, fishing for channel catfish has been good on various baits. Bluegill and crappie fishing continues to be fair to good in deeper backwater areas and around the wing dams on jigs tipped with minnows and worms or bobber rigs. Walleye and sauger fishing has been fair to good on crankbaits and jigs tipped with minnows and night crawlers along the wing dams. White bass fishing has been fair in the tailwater areas. Anglers have been catching a few flathead catfish. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair on crawlers, spinners and crankbaits. In **Pool 17**, the Big Timber area continues to be good for largemouth bass, crappie and bluegill fishing.

**Lake Odessa (Louisa):** The water level is down for the rest of the summer. Access to some of the remote ponds is now limited. Cool weather has the fish confused as to what time of year it is but anglers can still catch some nice crappies along the trees in Sand Run.

**Lake Belva Deer (Keokuk):** Bluegill fishing has finally slowed. Catfishing has picked up despite the up and down temperatures. Look for catfish along the creek channel in the trees and along the riprap in the lower end of the lake. Chicken liver and cut bait should work best for some nice 2-pound catfish.



**Lake Rathbun** (Appanoose): Walleyes continue to bite on minnows or night crawlers drifted or trolled around underwater rock reefs or other underwater structure. Channel catfish have been biting on stink bait and liver.

**Lake Sugema** (Van Buren): Largemouth bass have been hitting on artificial lures. Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs. Crappies have been biting on minnows fished around structure in 5 to 10 feet of water.

**Lake Miami** (Monroe): Channel catfish have been biting on liver and stink bait. Largemouth bass have been hitting on artificial lures.

**Lake Wapello** (Davis): Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs fished among the lily pads and along the outer edge of the weed line. Largemouth bass have been hitting on a variety of artificial presentations. Channel catfish have been biting on stink bait and chicken liver.

**Skunk River** (Washington): The river level is really starting to drop. Last week's nice weather has been bringing out the anglers and the catfishing has started to pick up. Creek chubs and stink bait are the best bets. Flatheads are being taken on sunfish and bullheads.

**Cedar River** (Louisa): Catfishing is fair to good. Stink bait seems to be the best. Look for the catfish in the deeper brush piles during the day and on the prowl along the sandbars during the night. Try a few green sunfish in those same areas for a chance to catch a nice flathead.

**Iowa River** (Washington and Louisa): Catfishing has been fair to good. Anglers using bank poles have been having some luck catching flatheads.

**For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.**

### **Northeast**

**Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15:** The Mississippi River at Guttenberg is 73 degrees and water levels are slowly dropping. Water clarity is good. Good fishing continues on **Pools 9 to 11** with white bass, channel catfish, bluegill, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, walleye and sauger all being caught in good numbers. White bass are starting to school up right now and action can be very fast. White bass up to 15 inches are being reported from tailwater areas near **Lock and Dams 9 and 10**, although some are being caught on the wing dams. Watch for schools feeding on minnows. If you see areas where minnows are continuously being chased, try to maintain some distance away from the melee to avoid spooking the white bass. Any lure that will flash, such as a spoon or a spinner, will work. Make long casts into the areas where the minnows have been breaking the water. Catfishing on the Mississippi River has been good with many 12 to 18-inch fish being taken. Try using stink baits or night crawlers for best action. Catfishing is generally done in current areas along the main channel or larger side channels. Anchor above fallen trees or root wads where the catfish live. Try to allow the scent of your stink bait to drift to the trees and pull out the hungry fish. By staying above the trees and luring the catfish out, you can avoid snagging up as often. Good catfishing locations are Minnesota Slough, Big Slough and Winneshiek Slough in **Pool 9**. Harpers Slough, McDonald Slough and State Line Slough can produce cats in **Pool 10**. Cassville Slough, Picayune Chute, Jack Oak Slough, and Hurricane Chute all are quality areas in **Pool 11**. Bluegill fishing continues to be quite good in **Pools 9 to 11** with many fish

being taken out of brush piles in moderate flowing sloughs. Minnesota Slough near New Albin, Harpers Slough near Harpers Ferry, Johnson and Wyalusing Slough near McGregor and Cassville Slough near Guttenberg have produced good fishing. A simple rig with a night crawler and a small split shot works best. Walleye and sauger action is also quite good at times on the Mississippi River. Some fish are being taken in the tailwaters of **Locks and Dams 9 and 10**. Most tailwater anglers are using a jig tipped with a minnow. Other places to try for walleye and sauger are large flowing sloughs such as Minnesota Slough near New Albin or Harpers Slough near Harpers Ferry. Anglers fishing these areas are using a 'Lindy' type rig with a night crawler. Largemouth bass fishing has been excellent in **Pools 9 to 11**. These fish are being caught on a variety of lures, but the traditional tube jig and spinner baits are working best. Largemouth are generally found in backwater lakes on the Mississippi, but with the low water levels, these fish are moving out into current areas. Look for largemouth to hang near the openings of large backwater complexes or in adjacent flowing sloughs. Some are being caught on rock wing dams. Big Slough and DeSoto Bay near Lansing have been hot in **Pool 9**. In **Pool 10**, McGregor Lake and the lakes near Wylusing Slough have been excellent and Cassville Slough has produced well in recent weeks. Smallmouth bass fishing is also excellent in **Pools 9 to 11**. Smallmouth bass are found in swift current areas with rock. These areas are generally associated with main channel rocky habitats, which include bank stabilization rock, day markers or wing dams. Spinners and crankbaits are the lures of choice. Using top-water lures, such as floating crankbaits or even bug imitating lures, can be effective for smallies. Many fish are in the sub-legal 10 to 13-inch range, but they still are fun to catch. The size limit on both large and smallmouth bass in the Mississippi River is 14 inches.

Water level on the **Mississippi River** at Bellevue is 5.04 feet and stable. The temperature is 70 degrees. Channel catfish are fair to good in **Pools 12 to 15**. Fishing for catfish has slowed with the cooler water temperatures; however, anglers are still catching catfish on prepared baits. Fish for channel cats in the main channel near the ends of wing dams in the faster currents. Freshwater drum fishing is excellent on night crawlers fished along side sloughs and the main channel border around the wing dams in **Pools 12 to 15**. When fishing for channel catfish or freshwater drum, if you don't get a bite in 10 to 15 minutes, move to find actively feeding fish. Walleye fishing is fair using night crawlers, leeches and crankbaits fished next to the wing dams in **Pools 12 to 15**. Largemouth bass are hitting top-water lures, spinner baits and jigs tipped with a worm fished in the backwater sloughs and main channel borders around woody structure, vegetation and off of rocks in **Pools 12 to 15**. Bluegill fishing is fair to good on worms fished under a bobber in **Pools 12 to 15**. Fish the main channel borders or backwater areas for bluegills concentrating near brush piles, rocky shorelines or vegetation in areas without current.

**Cedar River** (Floyd and Mitchell): A few walleye are being caught on jigs and crankbaits. Channel catfish are hitting chicken liver and cut-bait fished off the bottom.

**Cedar** (Bremer and Black Hawk), **Shell Rock** (Butler, Bremer and Black Hawk), and **Wapsipinicon rivers** (Buchanan): Channel catfish are hitting stink baits and dead and live minnows. Walleye fishing is fair on jigs tipped with a night crawler or leech. Smallmouth bass fishing is fair to good on crankbaits and jigs tipped with a piece of night crawler.

**Maquoketa River** (Delaware): Walleye fishing is good on jigs tipped with a night crawler. Channel catfish are good on night crawlers and dead minnows. Smallmouth bass are hitting crankbaits or jigs tipped with a night crawler.

**Lake Delhi** (Delaware): Crappie fishing is good around docks and snags using minnows.

**Meyer Lake** (Winneshiek): Bluegill fishing is good on night crawlers fished 7 to 8 feet deep around structure. Channel catfish are good on chicken liver or cut baits fished along the face of the dam.

**Lake Hendricks** (Howard): Bluegill fishing is excellent using worms or night crawlers in 10 to 12 feet of water next to structure. Channel catfish are hitting chicken liver. Largemouth bass are good on top-water lures fished in the early morning or late evening hours.

**Trout** fishing is excellent and streams are clear and fishable. **Sny Magill** and **Bloody Run** are stocked with catchable size trout twice each week with one stocking announced on the weekly recorded stocking hotline and one stocking unannounced. **Sny Magill** has numerous places for anglers to fish along miles of public access. **Bloody Run** has more limited access—but is well worth the extra effort of getting to the stream. The main access points on Bloody Run include the following: 1) the lower section just above the Hwy 18 bridge and within the county park; 2) the middle section which can be found by taking Iris Road north off Hwy 18 and fishing downstream of the cement bridge; and 3) the upper section of Bloody Run which can be accessed by driving north on the Spook Cave road and, just before you go down the steep hill, take a right on an unnamed gravel road section that looks like a driveway. Watch out for the large drainage humps and park in the area adjacent to the gate. From this location, you can go on foot down to the stream. There are two additional gates you can go through to fish further downstream—watch for the white public access signs. In addition to the three locations described above, Bloody Run has a remote section of stream anglers can access by walking upstream just above the Clayton County Conservation Park. On this section of stream, there is a 14-inch minimum size regulation for brown trout and anglers must use artificial lures only. For current trout stocking information on other northeast Iowa trout streams, call the trout stocking hotline at 563-927-5736. You can also access the proposed trout stocking calendar through the internet at [www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com) and go to the fish and fishing web pages.

**For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.**

### **Northwest**

**Spirit Lake** (Dickinson): Walleye fishing is slow. Anglers are finding a few fish off Buffalo Run in 18 to 22 feet of water and at Big Stoney Point and Anglers Bay using live bait. Smallmouth bass fishing is excellent using live bait along the deep weed lines. Yellow perch fishing is sporadic. Anglers are finding a few fish off Big Stoney Point and in Anglers Bay in 14 to 15 feet of water. Use wigglers from mid morning to mid afternoon for best results. Crappie fishing is good. Fish from Hales Slough over to Big Stoney Point in 6 feet of water. Perch fishers are catching crappies in Angler's Bay. White bass fishing is excellent. Follow the seagulls to find fish. The weed lines in Anglers Bay are holding small crappies that food for white bass and smallmouth bass.

**West Okoboji** (Dickinson): Bluegill fishing is good in shallow water early in the morning. Fish the deeper weed lines later in the day. Largemouth bass fishing is good around wooden docks near deep water and weed lines.

**Center Lake** (Dickinson): A strong channel catfish year class is active and typically receives little fishing pressure and is an excellent opportunity for 20-inch and larger fish.

**Silver Lake** (Dickinson): Good numbers of 2 to 3 pound channel catfish. Fish at night with chubs or night crawlers.

**Lake Pahoja** (Lyon): Channel catfish fishing is good. Pahoja is building a reputation as an excellent catfish lake.

**Five Island Lake** (Palo Alto): Good-sized channel catfish are available and biting. Use traditional baits.

**Black Hawk Lake** (Sac): Anglers are catching a few crappies off Ice House Point and jigging from docks. Channel catfish are still being caught on traditional baits.

**Storm Lake** (Buena Vista): Channel catfish are fair using stink bait, liver and other standard baits. Anglers are catching some walleyes, but are working for them.

**Yellow Smoke** (Crawford): Bluegill fishing is good drifting small jigs tipped with wigglers or wax worms.

**Crawford Creek** (Ida): Bluegill fishing is fair using jigs tipped with live bait early in the morning and late in the afternoon.

**Moorehead Lake** (Ida): Channel catfish are good using stink bait from shore.

**Brushy Creek** (Webster): Bluegills are scattered. At the north end of the lake, bluegills are in 5 to 15 feet of water. If fishing deeper areas, concentrate around larger trees. A few walleyes have been caught from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. using leeches. Bass have been hitting surface lures early and late in the day.

**Clear Lake** (Cerro Gordo): Walleyes are being caught trolling crankbaits in 10 to 14 feet of water, and on the outside edge of the bulrushes along the north shore. Yellow bass fishing has been fair on the west end of the lake in the Lone Tree Point area and the Baptist Camp. Fish in 5 to 7 feet of water using a small leadhead jig tipped with a piece of night crawler or cut bait. Channel catfish are taking chicken liver and dead chubs.

**Beeds Lake** (Franklin): Crappies are being caught by drift fishing a 1/32-ounce tube jig in the main basin of the lake. Fish within the top five feet of water, above the thermocline. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair casting the shoreline with either plastic lures or crankbaits.

**Lake Cornelia** (Wright): Yellow perch fishing is fair using night crawlers or minnows at the north end. Channel catfish are hitting night crawlers, chicken liver and stink bait. Bullhead fishing is good using night crawlers on the bottom.

**For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.**

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